

OZ THE GREAT AND POWERFUL

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



The newly released movie, *Oz the Great and Powerful*, has given us a theory about just how that Wicked Witch of the West got to be so bad. It is a mystical and magical tale that has all the elements of the beloved classic original film, with a bit of a modern flair and some fetching witches who are good, bad and ugly.

Remember the black and white introduction in the original where our hero Dorothy is on the Kansas farm? Well, this time it's a lothario magician – with a flair for theatrics – who takes on the task of becoming swept away by the tornado of his own emotions and the consequences of his dalliances. His inner goodness has yet to be discovered.

Oz is a magician, an illusionist who has charm and the ability to convince others that he is not just another con man. As he journeys along the familiar yellow bricks, he encounters many of the same creatures who've been transformed and enhanced by the magic of special computer effects. How he must deal with them is the reason to go along for the hot air balloon rides.

James Franco as Oz was an odd choice in contrast to who they cast as the trio of beautiful sorceresses, but he does alright and you can see how he grew into the older version of himself. He got there with a lot of help, good friends and a good woman who really believes in the great and powerful man behind the curtain. This is all about the journey to becoming who you are meant to be and believing in yourself. It is about learning the value of friends and of love. It is discovering where home really is.

So, why even mess with the original? Why not? Disney seems to like to take on these sorts of things. In this movie, they offer a new twist on the old faithful. Could this twist have used a few good songs? Sure, but there was enough action to keep things going and enough of a tease that if they wanted to tell the

stories of how the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion all came to be, I'd go along with that, too.

Although the original *Wizard of Oz* will always be one of my most watched and beloved films, there is nothing wrong with this new take on the old tale. Keep them coming, Disney. Each generation can relate to both the original and the new.

So, if you want to find out how the wizard got to be somewhere over the rainbow, check out *Oz the Great and Powerful*. Some critics think that the flying baboons are too scary for very young kids, but it depends on your kids. The ones in the theater I was in didn't seem to be upset, but you might check out a clip online just to be sure. I say pick up a box of licorice and head off to see the wizard.

I give *Oz the Great and Powerful* four couches.

